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ABSTRACT

A summary of an inquiry into the educational system of Newfoundland (Canada) presents the model for change designed by the Royal Commission of Inquiry, and the process used by the commission to obtain information. Public opinion on denominational education is examined, and costs of denominational schooling are explored. The commission sought to examine the system in the context of what the students of Newfoundland need and the resources which must be found to meet that need. The commission's 211 recommendations are designed to increase educational achievement, to render the education system more efficient, to involve parents in a meaningful way in their children's education, to provide more flexibility to boards and to schools, to allow access to governance for those now excluded, to increase cooperation among youth-serving agencies, to forge more productive relationships between the education system and other social institutions, and to establish an education system which is accountable at all levels and committed to self-improvement. (KDP)

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Our Children Our Future

Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education

EA 025 502

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
March, 1992

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Our Children Our Future

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education

Summary Report

Summary Report

The establishment of this inquiry into the school system has come at a crucial time in our history. Profound political, social and economic changes throughout the world are prompting educators everywhere to reassess the effectiveness and efficiency of their education systems. Despite the significant gains made in education over the past two decades since the report of the last Royal Commission on Education, there remains throughout the province a widespread and well-founded concern about the quality and direction of schooling. Declining enrolments, demands for access to governance from groups not now enfranchised, pressures to increase achievement levels, and decreasing financial resources have created demands for change which cannot be ignored. Several of these concerns – and one specific mandate of this Commission – focus directly on the current denominational structure of our education system and whether it is contributing to fiscal and educational inefficiencies. In addition to this consideration, there is also a widely-held and documented belief that educational standards are too low, and that too many graduates lack the basic and relevant skills required to function in our present society, let alone the modern, global marketplace that is quickly establishing itself as the economic arena of the future.

Within Newfoundland society, other changes have placed new demands on virtually all of our social institutions: chronic and perhaps irreversible changes in our traditional industries, the changing nature of the workplace, the introduction of new technologies, changing population characteristics, changing family structures, increasing strains on economic resources, new expectations, and a heightened awareness of the rights of individuals and groups whose liberties have been constrained in the past.

While the rate of change may be unprecedented today, change itself is, of course, nothing new. For instance, more than half of the 1,266 schools that existed in the province in the 1960s were one- or two-room buildings administered by 270 school boards through denominational superintendents at the Department of Education. Today there are 531 schools, 26 school boards with three Denominational Education Councils and a non-denominational Department of Education. These changes alone have substantially altered the province's education system.

Educational change is high on the public agenda, too. Since the very beginning of its work, the Commission has heard from all quarters – in submissions, focus groups, interviews, discussions and from the general

population through its extensive survey – that real change is needed now. Recognizing both the new demands on the system and its old inadequacies, most people told us that something substantive and substantial had to be done, even if they disagreed on *what* should be done. The Commission also heard what it believes to be a very genuine concern for the welfare of the children, and that, ultimately, it is this concern which must take precedence over all others.

In addition to educational and social imperatives, financial realities also dictate change. The fact is that we simply cannot afford to make the kind of qualitative changes necessary without new structural efficiency in the education system. Considering all of the different – and sometimes conflicting – positions advanced in more than a thousand submissions to the Commission, it is impossible to derive a model for change that can satisfy everyone. Instead, it must be founded on the real needs of our children, now and for the coming decades. The Commission has founded its recommendations and its model for change on this assumption and believes that this assumption is unassailable.

The Commission rejected the proposition that fine-tuning the existing system could adequately address the problems confronting it. The Commission believes the need to improve substantially the education our children receive makes it imperative that substantial changes be effected. The Commission proposes a number of major thrusts for the kind of thorough-going reform it believes necessary to ensure our children's futures as individuals and our future as a society. These are the development of a new mandate for schooling; the restructuring of the system's administration at the provincial, school district and school levels and the establishment of non-denominational school boards in place of the present system; the full involvement and enfranchisement of the public in the governance of the system; the development of attainment standards for students; the refinement of the process of curriculum development and implementation; and the improvement of existing practices at every level of the school system. More specifically it proposes publicly elected school boards funded on the basis of need, teachers employed on professional merit, church involvement at the provincial and school levels, and appropriate religious education programs for all school students.

The Commission realizes that in proposing such reforms it has challenged what are, for some people, very important values and traditions, especially those which touch on separate denominational schooling. The Commission also recognizes that its proposals may conflict with some of the Constitutional guarantees placed in Newfoundland's Terms of Union with Canada in 1949. However, it cannot accept that the wording or spirit

of these rights and privileges established decades ago were intended to paralyse the system in perpetuity, and stifle the ability of the system to respond effectively to change.

Indeed, whatever the legal implications, the history of education in Newfoundland has had a long-established precedent of change. Its history is not the record of a static institution, but of a living, responsive and evolving system. The education system began here in response to specific needs under very trying circumstances, and its evolution over the centuries has been a story of adaptation, restructuring and accommodation to changing times, conditions and priorities. When government began to fund education directly in the 1800s, it recognized and enfranchised the religious denominations then established in the colony, but it did not preclude the possibility of changing to meet future needs or limit participation to those who held majority positions. Thus, in 1892 the Salvation Army was recognized under the *Education Act*, followed by the Seventh Day Adventists in 1912, and in 1954 the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland was recognized without amendment to the Terms of Union. These additions were all made to ensure minority rights; no expansion was required, legally or constitutionally. They were conferred by consensus, from an impulse which recognized a need for the fair treatment of all within our society.

More recently, the same recognition of the need to respond to changing circumstances led to the reorganization of the Department of Education along non-denominational lines and to the amalgamation of Anglican, United Church and Salvation Army school boards in the 1960s. During the past few decades, too, there has been increased sharing of resources as school boards have come to face and meet the challenge to rationalize and consolidate their delivery systems and resources. Today – as this report shows – joint-service schools and interdenominational sharing can be found in locations all around the province. Operational funding to schools, as well, has long been determined by need rather than along strict, denominational lines as set down in the Terms of Union. All this has come without the loss of rights – but with the gain of tolerance, understanding and a stronger sense of who we are and what we can do together.

While all of this sharing and co-operation has been good, it cannot go very much further within the present administrative framework. Unless the natural process of change is to be artificially and unnaturally halted, the next step in our evolutionary development must come, and we must ensure that it is towards the creation of a comprehensive, unified and efficient administrative structure.

Some will object that the Commission's model does not remove the church from the educational establishment. However, the Commission recognizes that the role of the churches was essential in the early history of education, in their extensive investment in the school system since that time, in their deep commitment of people and resources, and in their sincere and profound commitment to the well-being of the people of this province. And although most people do not want to retain a denominational school structure, most do want the opportunity for spiritual and religious education and a church presence within the process of education. The Commission has therefore recommended that the churches retain an important and appropriate role within the Newfoundland education framework.

In reflecting on the range of issues and concerns brought before the Commission, it was concluded that many of the existing educational problems cannot be dealt with entirely within any education system. While many of the problems reflected on the faces of youth in classrooms are problems of long-standing and have originated in society at large, teachers must deal with all students regardless of the problems they bring to school. The Commission knows that education can make a profound difference to society, but it cannot do it without help – no matter how well the system is designed and implemented. The home environment is critical to successful learning, and parents' expectations for schooling and their involvement in school can influence their child's learning. These are some of the reasons parents and others must be able to play a significant role in school affairs. But other agencies must also share the responsibility of addressing the myriad of social and economic problems that are manifested, but not created, in the schools. The Commission believes that the efforts of all government departments must therefore be deployed in a more co-ordinated and effective manner if these problems are to be met to the satisfaction of the individuals in need of help and of society at large.

Perhaps more than any other institution the education system is tied to the society and the world which shapes it and which it, in turn, comes to define. Education does not and cannot exist in a vacuum – or an ivory tower – oblivious to change, because it *is* such a fundamental cornerstone of our society and therefore of the legacy we leave to coming generations. The education system here, or anywhere that adequately prepares youth for the future, cannot be compromised by an insular view of the world. We must construct bridges, not perpetuate social or intellectual isolation.

Finally, the Commission recognizes that the only way to achieve a fully integrated system, except for voluntary agreement on the part of the holders of the rights and privileges, may be a Constitutional amendment.

This would involve the removal or radical reworking of Article 17 of the Terms of Union. However, the Commission believes that just as in 1969, five churches were able to join together to form a single system, now in 1992, it is possible for all churches to disengage further and create a new system which will preserve the valued Christian character of schooling, and at the same time recognize the educational, economic and social advantages of participating in a co-operative approach to schooling. Two things guided the Commission's thinking in this respect. It was evident from the public hearings, opinion poll and submissions that the vast majority of Newfoundlanders were not in favour of creating a secular, public system of schooling. The Commission shares these sentiments. Second, from the standpoint of what is desirable for the student, the Commission concluded that one of the strengths of the present school system is the very strong emphasis on morals and values undergirding it and that this should be retained. The education system has not been indifferent to the need for change in the past in order to address demands for quality schooling and there is no reason why changes cannot be made now which will address the need of new approaches and build a more responsive and efficient system of schooling. We must build on these strengths and recognize the clear economic and educational advantage of participating in a fully co-ordinated manner as we confront the challenges ahead.

THE PROCESS

To stimulate discussion of the issues and to provide an opportunity for those who wished to express their views directly to the Commission, 36 public hearings were scheduled in 29 different centres between November 1990 and October 1991. The response to this process clearly demonstrated that there exists a very high level of interest and concern for the children, schools and the education system of this province. Literally thousands of citizens participated in surveys and discussions, prepared submissions or presented briefs at public hearings. A total of 1,041 written and oral presentations, representing 3,677 individuals and 384 groups and organizations were received. The submissions came from 173 communities from all geographic areas of the province, and represented a broad spectrum of society, including parents, teachers, school boards, business and industry, churches, education and health associations, and community groups. In addition to the briefs, 128 petitions containing 8,787 names were received.

In the course of its deliberations, meetings were held with key individuals and groups to seek advice with respect to the terms of reference

and methodology. Throughout the inquiry, members of the Commission also held meetings with groups of students, parents, teachers, principals, school district staff, government agencies, interest groups, and major provincial organizations both within and outside the province to provide valuable insights into the attitudes, expectations and opinions of the key participants in education. The Commission visited 51 schools around the province. These visits provided opportunities to discuss the work of the schools with principals and teachers, to inquire into the quality of school life with students, to observe the climate and character of the schools, and to see first hand the conditions under which schooling takes place. Meetings with students were carried out informally and often yielded insights into the education system that would not have been possible otherwise.

To gain further insight into a variety of issues brought before the Commission, expert panels, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were extensively used. At critical stages, decisions were made requiring not just the findings of the public hearings and research studies, but also input of individuals informed about and sensitive toward the education system, its governance and its impact on local conditions.

THE CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

Today, the trend to recognize individual needs and the trend toward cultural pluralism have led to an education system embracing various forms of accommodation. These are manifested in several ways: second language programs, special education, curriculum reform, special resource allocations. In fact, the principle that the needs of individuals and interest groups should be met by the education system has become a public expectation even though the principle frequently results in tension between the forces of individual and social identity, and between cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity. Some of the pressure for structural changes now being placed upon the education system come from those who are now disenfranchised by it. The challenge is to develop yardsticks by which to determine which educational programs and services should be provided, to whom, and in what form.

Coping with technological change and scientific innovation will require a sound set of basic skills which go beyond the necessary fundamentals of literacy and numeracy. They will require such new basics as critical and creative thinking, the capacity for independent learning, the ability to synthesize and communicate information, and innovative problem solving.

To a large degree, the education system in the coming years will be influenced by various global conditions over which we have little control. These conditions will provide both opportunities for, and threats to, our educational programs and services. In any case, they will force us to re-think our mission, to reexamine our goals, to clarify our roles and to develop new strategies. They will, in fact, force us to re-think everything, from how we organize our schools to how we teach our classes. To use an industrial metaphor, we will be forced to *retool* our schools to deal with new expectations for a new type of learner – one capable of responding to an ever-changing post-industrial, high-technology age. Much of the public criticism of education, which has emanated to a large degree from the business community, has centred on the need for a graduate who is not so much a storehouse of knowledge but a manipulator of knowledge, capable of responding to personal, social and business needs.

Most countries are now simultaneously more competitive and more interdependent but they are all dependent on human capital for their development. The costs to individuals and economies which fail to invest in their human capital and accept low educational attainment are high and rising. In a changing economic and technological environment, individuals *must* enter the labour force with at least a minimal level of competencies.

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

In order to obtain a broad, unbiased picture of current public attitudes on issues relating to denominational education, The Royal Commission engaged in a scientifically designed survey. Every effort was made to secure and safeguard the highest methodological standards of public opinion research. The survey was based on a random sample of 1,001 individuals equally distributed throughout the province according to population base. Such a sample can be expected to represent percentages accurately to within plus or minus 3.3 per cent of true population values, 19 times out of 20.

The results of the public opinion survey indicated that by a majority approaching consensus, the Newfoundland public favoured a unified, non-sectarian system, but not one which would be wholly secular. In the first place, it was evident that there continues to be overwhelming interest in education. Some 95 percent of those responding to the public opinion poll expressed an interest in education, and of these 83 percent said they were "very interested". There was widespread support, therefore, for the

Commission's view that "the primary focus of the investigation should be educational quality; hence, the support for the position that Newfoundlanders "cannot afford to make the kind of qualitative changes necessary without new structural efficiency in the education system".

Thus, in the second place, there was pervasive support for the fundamental changes in governance recommended by the Commission. Between 70 and 85 percent of the public opinion poll sample, depending on religious affiliation, endorsed the teaching of religious education in multi-denominational settings. Seventy-four percent endorsed the teaching of religious education by the teacher of another denomination; and 81 percent believed that there should be no denominational restriction on the hiring of teachers. Most respondents believed that all children should attend the same schools (85 percent); and, in keeping with this, that there should be a single school system for all children regardless of religion (70 percent). In terms of sharing and co-operation among denominations, most respondents held the view that all denominations should co-operate to establish jointly operated school boards (87 percent); that in each area of the province there should be a single bus system serving all denominations (85 percent); and that even the members of non-recognized denominations should be allowed to run for school board election (82 percent).

It would seem that public endorsement of these changes indicates that most people do not wish to retain the formal denominational structure; but, rather, an interdenominational system. Nevertheless, there were important features of the education system which people wished to retain. Thus, in the third place, most wished to preserve and promote a church presence in the schools; one providing assurance that the churches' responsibility for the moral and spiritual formation of students would be recognized and strengthened. Overwhelmingly, people believed that teachers should exemplify religious values and standards (88 percent); and that religion should be taught in school (77 percent). While a large majority want some form of religious education to continue, they have not endorsed its continuance in an exclusively denominational setting.

Many of the "changes" already represent current practice in some school boards; for example, the teaching of religion in a non-confessional, non-doctrinaire manner; or the recognition that the religious affiliation of teachers is of little consequence in hiring decisions. But most of the changes supported by some 80 percent or more of the opinion poll sample represent a significant departure from the present system of separate denominational schools and denominational school boards. The consistency with which respondents replied to multiple questions on these fundamental matters of governance left little doubt as to their intent.

COSTING THE SYSTEM

The denominational system of education in Newfoundland has long been criticized on the grounds that it is both discriminatory and costly. The exclusion of disenfranchised individuals, religious minorities or other concerned groups from active participation on school boards or decision-making at any level has been the central theme of human rights advocates. There are those who severely criticize the system as being expensive, inefficient and over administered. Critics point to the duplication of schools, the relative absence of large-scale sharing, a lack of balance and relevance with respect to the curriculum, overlapping bus routes, and poor achievement levels. All this despite a large per-capita expenditure on education in relation to other provinces. On the other hand, defenders of the system point to the well-established partnership between church and state - one that has remained largely unchallenged for 115 years. Its legitimacy, proponents say, is well established. All sides appear in agreement that a thorough accounting of the education system should be undertaken in order to discover what the presence of the churches in the governance and administration of education adds to the total operating costs of the system.

The Commission developed a methodology which would lead to the identification, measurement and analysis of all the elements constituent in our school system. Four models of education, specifically addressing the mandate issues of (1) the extent of duplication resulting from the denominational aspect of the school system, and (2) the extent to which schools and school districts can be further consolidated, were developed. The first model (Model A) was the status quo; that is, based on prevailing 1989-90 efficiencies. Model B, the second model, was based on an education system which was rationalized through maximum consolidation and sharing within the existing denominational structures. In contrast to Models A and B, the remaining two models, Models C and D, were non-denominational in nature. That is not to say that Models C and D would be unconnected with religion, only that for governing purposes denominations would no longer have legalized governance control. Model C was based on prevailing 1989-90 efficiencies similar to Model A, and Model D was based on an education system which was rationalized through maximum consolidation and sharing similar to Model B.

The comparative costs of the four types of school systems are as follows: Model A, the status quo in 1989-90, cost $519.7 million; Model B, the denominational system with maximum sharing and consolidation, cost $512.9 million; Model C, the non-denominational model with 1989-90

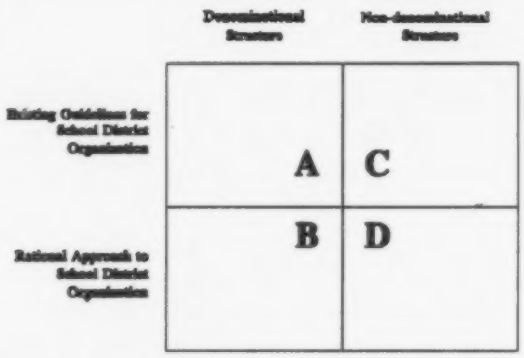

Figure 1. Framework for the Development of Individual Models.

efficiencies, cost $506.4 million; and Model D, the non-denominational model with maximum sharing and consolidation cost $498.4 million.

In theory, there would be considerable savings by adopting Model D over Model A ($21.3 million). However, the Commission does not believe that it is fair to make invidious comparisons between denominational and non-denominational systems when known efficiencies could be introduced to the denominational system as represented by Model B. A comparison of a streamlined denominational system (Model B), with the most efficient non-denominational system (Model D), could result in savings of $14.5 million. The comparative savings between various combinations of Models is shown in Figure 3. If the system has to be changed in some way to make it more efficient and to better rationalize the use of our scarce educational resources, the true alternatives become a choice between Models B and D.

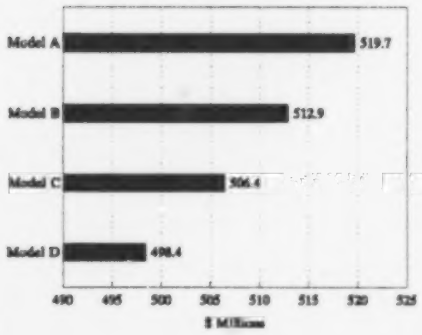

Figure 2. Total Operating Costs under each Model.

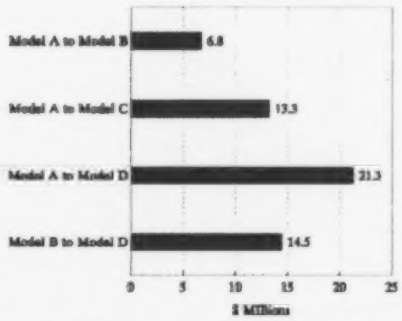

Figure 3. Differences between Individual Models.

RE-ORGANIZING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Commission proposes a school system which retains many of the benefits of the denominational system while incorporating the needs and concerns of those not now fully served by the existing system. The Commission proposes a system where churches will have educational input and a continuing role in the spiritual development of students of their denominational persuasion through the development of religious programs and pastoral care initiatives. The proposed system would involve the formal integration of all faiths and the development of policies and practices which would involve all citizens in schooling and school governance. There is enough evidence from the multiple co-operative efforts developed in recent years and the joint-service school experiences that schools can meld different denominational philosophies within a single setting and, at the same time, provide a more favourable educational, environment and greater learning opportunities for students.

School Councils

If the school system is to reach its maximum potential with the resources available, the Commission believes it is essential to establish the means for effective parental involvement in the governance of the province's schools. Participation by parents, teachers and others in the community can bring improvement in educational achievement and an increase in public advocacy for education. Within the proposed model, parents and others from the community at large, would see their former role expanded, formalized and given a genuine authority within the structure of school government through the development of school councils at the school level. These school councils would consist of elected representatives of parents and teachers, the school principal, as well as appointees from the churches and members of the business community selected by the Council itself. school councils would be mandated to protect local educational interests, influence the formation of the school, share in decisions such as curriculum, funding and staffing, authorize all discretionary school-level fund raising, involve parents, analyze information, prepare annual reports and hold meetings with parents.

Schools

The Commission believes that each school must be free to welcome all students and create an atmosphere which fosters tolerance, freedom of association, understanding and sensitivity to all students. It should also

make appropriate religious education programs available for all who want them. The most promising way to address the challenges facing the school system and to maximize use of resources is through an interdenominational approach to schooling. The common denominators uniting the system should be parental concern for the provision of a quality education for their children undertaken in a school environment which reflects Christian principles and values.

School Boards

The Commission recommends that the current 27 school boards be replaced by nine publicly elected school boards (Figure 4). Fully elected, non-denominational school boards would be accountable to the public and, therefore, would offer greater opportunity for citizens to take responsibility for the education of our children. There is a need for boards to be creative and innovative in their approaches to the delivery of professional services to schools. To achieve this end, the Commission recommends they be resourced in a manner which gives them flexibility in how they can use their funds and deploy personnel.

A list of recommended school districts, including hypothetical student enrolments for the 1989-90 school year, follows:

1. Avalon East	38,097
2. Avalon West	15,737
3. Burin Peninsula	7,372
4. Gander-Bonavista	15,691
5. Exploits-Green Bay-Bay d'Espoir	19,152
6. Corner Brook-Deer Lake	11,531
7. Stephenville-Port aux Basques	9,739
8. Northern Peninsula-Southern Labrador	5,852
9. Labrador	6,938

Figure 4. Proposed Educational Districts.

Government

The Commission recognizes that there is a need to retain a provincial church presence in education to advise Government on educational policy which affects the rights of denominations to oversee the development of Religious Education and Family Life programs and to facilitates pastoral care programs. The Commission recommends that these advisory responsibilities be fulfilled through church participation in the existing Denominational Policy Commission.

The Commission further recommends that a School Planning and Construction Board be established which would have responsibility for the distribution of capital funds on the basis of province-wide priorities rather than on denominational priorities. The Commission further recommends that responsibility currently held by the Denominational Education Councils concerning the selection, training, indenturing and initial certification of teachers be assigned to the existing Teachers' Certification Committee. The Commission believes that capital funds should be distributed on the basis of province-wide priority needs rather than on a denominational basis; and therefore recommends that a School Council and Planning Board be established with this responsibility.

TEACHING TODAY

The interaction between teacher and student has always been at the heart of the schooling experience. As spectacular and powerful as modern technology is, it will never replace good teaching or satisfy a student's need for a person who can lead then beyond text books. Although it is not likely that schools and teachers can ever satisfy all of the demands made on them, a leadership style which encourages collaboration as a means of involving teachers in educational decision-making would contribute to more positive attitudes and instructional improvement. As teachers face new reforms and further increased expectations it is important that they work and plan more with their colleagues, sharing and developing their expertise together.

The Commission found much dissatisfaction among teachers with the opportunities, quality and focus of current in-service education and professional development practices. A new, comprehensive and coordinated approach to the professional development of teachers and administrators in the province involving the university, the department of education and the school system is required for a variety of reasons.

Similarly, there is need for broad-based leadership throughout the education system. The Commission was told repeatedly that although good things are happening and pockets of able leadership exist, the times demand an intensified focus on leadership development. much of the good leadership that has emerged can be attributed to the personal qualities of individuals who wanted to change things for the better - rather than to a system which values the development of leadership.

Thus the Commission recommends the establishment of a Professional Development Centre which would address the need for enhancing leadership and professional development. There must be a deliberate effort to encourage leadership and excellence in every facet of the system. To achieve this, the system will have to provide universal access for teachers and administrators to leadership and professional development activities, and sufficient resources so that every individual can be effectively and efficiently served. The Commission further recommends that all teachers and administrators be required to participate in professional development activities to maintain valid teaching licences.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Children who are disadvantaged because of social, economic or health difficulties have the same right of access to education as other children, but barriers exist which prevent them from having the same opportunity for success. As a society, schools are expected to meet the personal and other needs of children along with their academic needs. However, this fairly recent assumption that schools must provide services previously supplied by other societal agencies and by the family is providing a major challenge for the education system. School personnel have neither the training, time, nor resources to deliver these services with any kind of quality. There is also a danger that if schools attempt to provide all these services, all the students may be adversely affected. In other words, to expect the education system to satisfy all the social and developmental needs of its students is to change - if not to undermine - its primary mandate and jeopardize overall academic achievement. On the other hand, if the social and developmental needs are not addressed in some other way, the school will also be prevented from achieving its educational goals.

The Commission recommends that all government departments and youth-serving agencies recognize their responsibilities to provide for the educational and other needs of children. There must be a commitment on the part of all to co-operate and work towards the goal of helping children

rise above any personal circumstances that may be limiting them from enjoying equal opportunity to educational success.

CURRICULUM

The term *curriculum* means different things to different people. Some use the term to refer to the subjects offered in a school, while others include all of the experiences - including extra-curricular activities - a child might have under the guidance of the school. One of the critical factors affecting curriculum is its relevance to children and learning. A relevant curriculum accommodates all children even if they have significant differences in their needs and interests, aptitudes, learning styles, learning rates, attitudes towards different disciplines, personal goals and aspirations. Everything about education influences and is influenced by the curriculum. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the focus of the curriculum be clear and that it be designed to meet the goals and objectives of the school system and of society in general.

The school system is designed for academic education and this must be its primary role. To this end, children must have the opportunity and must be encouraged to pursue academic studies to the limit of their abilities. The Commission recommends that a core curriculum be established comprising a minimum of 50 percent of instruction time in the disciplines of Language, Mathematics and Science and in which standards of achievement in these subjects become a primary aim of education at all levels. Because these core subjects are fundamental to success in all other subjects, they should be assigned the largest time allocations, and evaluation in these areas should constitute an indicator of student, school and system performance.

The ability to think abstractly, conceptualize and solve problems is becoming increasingly important in the workplace and in all aspects of living. Although the specific content of the curriculum is important, in a world of rapidly changing technologies and an unprecedented explosion of knowledge, learning how to locate, analyze and utilize information and how to think critically about it is also crucial. Now more than ever, the emphasis of education must be on acquiring process skills, as specific content becomes outdated with increasing rapidity, especially in the technical and scientific fields. In other words, it is essential that children learn *how to think* and *how to learn*.

Although there is merit in having the responsibility for curriculum development at the provincial level, there is also a need for more substantial involvement of other educators. The process of developing,

revising and implementing curricula should be a joint responsibility involving the Department of Education, school boards and schools. Under a curriculum model proposed by the Commission, the Department of Education would be responsible for establishing the vision, goals, objectives and standards of the curriculum, as well as for its development and the determination of appropriate evaluation guidelines. School boards would be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the curriculum in addition to being able to modify it to reflect local circumstances and to update it when necessary. In addition to contributing to curriculum development at the provincial level, principals and teachers, in consultation with board personnel, would have responsibility for translating provincial and district learning objectives into practical learning experiences in the classroom.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Small schools will always exist in Newfoundland. It is logistically and financially impossible to offer every high school course as well as every elective to every student in the province. In order to be able to expose students in small schools to a broader range of course options and to reduce some of the disparities between educational resources in this province and those available to other Canadian students, the Commission recommended: (a) the establishment of a Provincial Advisory Committee on Distance Education and Technology to advise the Department of Education on policies, priorities and strategies; (b) the establishment of a School of Distance Education and Technology responsible for the delivery of distance education courses and services and the integration of new technology into the school system; and (c) that the current distance education curriculum development process be fully integrated with the regular curriculum development process. To facilitate these mandates, the Commission further recommended that all schools be equipped with the technology necessary to implement such programs.

THE SCHOOL YEAR

Time is one of the greatest resources available to the school system, but it must be used constructively if students are to gain the fullest benefit from the hours they spend in the classroom. Students and teachers must have enough time to do justice to the curriculum they have before them, so that all students have a realistic opportunity to achieve the goals that have

been set and to attain a high level of excellence in their studies. Concerns about time were among those most frequently raised with the Commission, and participants criticized both the quantity and quality of the time spent in school.

In addressing the issue of too little instructional time, the Commission considered several approaches: tightening the school schedule to ensure a more effective use of the time already allotted; dealing with disruptions to class time and absenteeism; mandating a specific number of days exclusively for teaching; and increasing the number of days in the school year. All these approaches warrant careful attention but priority should be given to focusing on the more effective use of the time already allocated for instruction. This should have priority since it is educationally sound and the most cost effective means of increasing instructional time. School boards should make every effort to minimize the impact of time lost to examinations. In addition, however, given the growing demands on the education system and the global competition that the present generation must face, the Commission has concluded that the school year must be increased as well and that this, too, warrants immediate action. The Commission recommended that the school year be extended to 200 days as follows:

185 instructional days,

5 days for teacher in-service,

3 paid holidays,

2 administrative days, and

5 days for extra-curricular activities.

In order to facilitate the learning process, the Commission also recommends that consideration be given to the establishment of alternative classroom settings for students who have difficulty maintaining acceptable behaviour in the regular school settings, that those settings would be oriented to preparing students for re-entry to the regular classroom and, would meet all basic curricular assessment requirements. School Councils would monitor, evaluate and reduce the instances of chronic absenteeism in their schools.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The ultimate aim of any change in the school system must be to improve the quality of education. The Commission heard strong concerns that the education system has not been responsive enough to recent

pressures and demands, and believes there should be an insistence on improvement. Therefore, we must seek improvement even within the best of systems, as our body of knowledge grows and as demands on the system increase.

If the quality of the education system is to be measured, the means for judging how well students are being educated, must be established. Because education is a vast, labour-intensive enterprise which demands a large share of public revenues, it is reasonable for the public to ask whether it is getting enough value for the tax dollars that go to education. Under the recent conditions of financial constraint, those calls for accountability have become more insistent. As demands on government services are growing and the public are increasingly concerned about their own tax burden, governments are scrutinizing expenditures for ways to maintain services while reducing costs.

All accountability must ultimately assure all sectors of the public that the resources being put into education represent a sound and cost-effective investment in the future, and that the educational experiences provided to our children are of the highest quality. This is true whether one views education as an economic investment, a means of cultural transmission, an instrument of social change or an end in itself. The following are some of the reasons for holding the education system accountable for its performance:

1. the need to maintain acceptable standards of performance,
2. the demand for efficiency in light of diminishing resources,
3. the need for all to be informed about the performance of the system and how tax revenues are used,
4. the increased importance of education for economic development, and
5. the need for continual improvement in the system because an unresponsive system is likely to prove stagnant and non-competitive.

There is little doubt that the current system of accountability needs to be strengthened. More reliable and more relevant educational performance indicators must be developed, measured, analyzed and reported.

Because education is structured as a hierarchical system, it might be argued that the school boards and the province's legislature should be ultimately accountable for the performance of the education system. On the other hand, the educational unit closest to the public is the school. This is where the children are and where parental concerns are focused. It is also clear that the school is the crucial unit for educational innovation and improvement. The Commission recommends that every school be comprehensively assessed every five years.

Schools in which superb academic performance has been achieved, innovative ideas have been implemented, or exemplary leadership and teaching has taken place must be formally recognized in some way. The use

of recognition and rewards can be a significant factor in influencing school effectiveness. The Commission feels strongly that although achievement should be recognized, means must be found to identify schools which are underachieving in relation to comparable schools and establish teams of educators to devise improvement plans for them.

FUNDING EDUCATION

The issues affecting education in this province and those that the Commission has had to address are diverse and complex. While there has always been a tension between the principles of education and the realities of finance, we must deal with a nation-wide economic decline, disasters in our provincial resource-based industries and a new era of fierce international competition in our traditional marketplaces. This necessitates a level of scrutiny, caution and accountability never before applied to education or to government programs in general.

Few would deny that schooling confers important benefits not only on the individual child, but also on society as a whole, and, indeed, this assumption underlies many of the recommendations of the Commission. Some people have argued further that education is the solution to the province's economic woes. While the Commission does not believe that education can cure all of our economic afflictions, it does stand firmly behind the belief that a better education will bring significant economic benefits to individuals, to governments and to society.

In terms of finance and economics, everyone, in fact, is better served by a higher-quality education. Better-educated graduates are likely to earn higher incomes than those who are less well prepared; they are also more likely to generate new wealth, perhaps rising to meet competition in international marketplaces, and expanding the financial base of the province. This in turn may generate other jobs and further revenues for government, and eventually lead to greater government contributions to the school system. This is the kind of cycle we must perpetuate, and not a descending spiral of diminishing returns.

In considering the problem of how the education system should be financed, it is essential that a comprehensive financial plan, based on the education finance principles of equity, efficiency, adequacy, ability and stability, be developed. Every child, regardless of location, age, ability, and socioeconomic status, deserves an equal opportunity to learn and to develop to his or her potential. A financial plan must positively stand up to political scrutiny to ensure government support. The plan must be adaptable to changing economic conditions, societal demands of education, and processes of education. The plan must effectively meet the goals of public financing of education; that is, that schools impart basic knowledge, values and skills equitably to all children; that the tax burden for education be reasonably and equitably distributed; that those who are responsible for the delivery of education have the autonomy they require to respond to

local needs; and that school boards and schools have effective and efficient management.

To facilitate this plan, the Commission recommends a system of block funding for the distribution of education dollars from the provincial treasury. Through block funding, boards are allocated an equitable portion of the education budget which they then have the autonomy to spend based on local needs and priorities. The size of the block and the method for equitable allocation would be determined in consultation with the major provincial educational organizations through the use of a comprehensive budgetary process. Accountability is also vital. Although the block is intended to enhance responsiveness to local needs, its use must be carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure that educational goals are being met (eg. through the use of independent evaluators).

The current debt load of Newfoundland and Labrador school boards stands at over $41 million. The Commission feels that this debt is hindering effective schooling and recommends that all existing long term debt of school boards be eliminated and that school boards not be permitted to incur future debt nor to operate in a deficit position.

Concern was expressed over the seemingly endless school-based fund raising drives occurring all over the province. Although most efforts of this nature are earmarked for extracurricular activities (eg. sports teams, class trips, graduation, etc.), in some areas of the province children have taken to the street to peddle chocolate bars in order to raise money for such basic necessities as chalk and paper. Fund raising efforts need to be monitored and reported to the public. The Commission believes that guidelines to govern the conditions and purposes under which school-based funds are raised must be developed.

The necessity of finding new approaches to financing education has become increasingly evident over the last several years. Economic, demographic, technological and social changes, although outside the immediate realm of education, are nevertheless exerting profound pressure upon the education system. Declining enrolments, new information technologies and rising costs present challenges that demand immediate and innovative solutions. Finding those solutions calls for a combination of creativity, study and inspiration. The Commission strongly believes the proper and enlightened financing of education is the instrument for effecting such innovation.

FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

While constitutional responsibility for education at the primary, elementary and secondary levels rests with the provinces, the Commission believes that it is timely to examine the possibility of introducing a federal presence in education; in particular, the creation of a national office of education. Such an agency would address national goals for schooling, establish national standards, establish standards for the collection of

educational data, conduct national education assessments, and serve as a centre for information on education research and improvements.

CONCLUSION

In carrying out its assignment to review the delivery system of education in this province, this Commission sought to examine the system in the context of what the students of this province need and the resources which must be found to meet that need. Constitutional barriers to changes in the education system cannot be taken lightly, but the Commission felt it had no choice but recommend a model which would safeguard the provision of religious education and spiritual formation but would remove the administrative features which caused duplication, inefficiency and the exclusion of those not holding rights under the constitution. The challenges facing the system are too great to allow structures designed in earlier times to interfere with the provision of the best education system possible. The Commission's recommendations are designed to increase educational achievement, to render the education system more efficient, to involve parents in a meaningful way in their children's education, to provide more flexibility to boards and to schools, to allow access to governance for those now excluded, to increase co-operation among youth-serving agencies, to forge more productive relationships between the education system and other social institutions, and to establish an education system which is accountable at all levels and committed to self-improvement.

The Commission is fully aware that some people will view some of its recommendations as interfering with protected rights and privileges and a direct assault on the denominational system. Nevertheless, the Commission firmly believes that its recommendations reflect the most promising and realistic means of confronting both the problems within the school system and the opposing visions of how that system should be run. It appeals to all sides in the denominational debate to put aside their differences and work together to solve the serious problems experienced by the school system. Churches will continue to have educational input at the highest level of government and a continuing role in the spiritual development of students in religious education programs and pastoral care initiatives.

The Royal Commission on Education was mandated to establish a vision which can guide the educational system for some considerable time to come. It feels the challenges confronting the system are so significant that only a frank and realistic approach to change will suffice. The Commission recognizes the potential for controversy in what is proposed and the concessions it will require from some. Nevertheless, it believes the changes it has recommended are so vital to the long-term welfare of our children that their best interests and the future of our province must prevail over any privileges and other interests which may be at stake.

There is no greater challenge facing this province than ensuring that our children obtain the skills, knowledge and abilities essential to survival in a fast-changing highly competitive world the challenge is not

insurmountable. However, fundamental changes are required to create sensitive, responsive learning environments capable of preparing our youth for the future. This report places such a challenge, in the form of wide-ranging reform to the education system, before the Newfoundland public, the Legislature, Church authorities and educators. The Commission recognizes that confronting the changes proposed is not an easy task. Constitutional, moral, historical, economic, social and political variables interact to define what is or is not possible. However, as difficult as it is, there must be serious efforts to address the quality and future of schooling in the province. We must and can work together to build an education system which our children and province need and deserve. Nothing less will do for our children, our future.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning for Success: Governance

1 that, recognizing the reality of a pluralistic democracy, declining enrolments and diminishing resources, the proposed model which is responsive to the needs of all constituent groups, yet recognizes the desire of the majority to retain a school system based on Judeo-Christian principles, be adopted and implemented.

2 that, where numbers warrant, children be provided with opportunities for religious activities and instruction in their own faith, and that the school system be sensitive and responsive to children of all religious groups.

3 that every school be given the services of a principal who will have release teaching time for administrative duties.

4 that, where space allows, school admission policies be based on the following priorities:
First, children already enroled in school and their siblings,
Second, children who live near a school entering the school system for the first time,
Third, children who live near a school but are enroled elsewhere,
Fourth, children from outside the local area.

5 that the Department of Education and school boards continue to investigate and promote school quality models such as school-based management and magnet schools.

6 that, with the support of the school staff, parents and the community, school boards support schools which wish to pursue distinctive paths which can lead to specialization within the curriculum.

7 that the Department of Education define the basic elements of a foundation program which addresses the needs of every child and which will serve as the cornerstone of provincial funding for education.

8 that school consolidation be considered on the following grounds:
1. schools which are not viable and are within reasonable distance of another school, be targeted for consolidation, and
2. schools which are not viable and are *not* within reasonable distance of another school, be mandated a basic foundation program.

9 that viability be considered in relation to:
1. the enrolment, location and quality of school facilities,
2. the scope of the programs offered,
3. the availability of resources within the schools,
4. the types of services available within the surrounding area, and
5. the attainment of provincially-developed standards of achievement.

10 that the school boards define and communicate the conditions and establish the process under which school consolidation will take place.

11 that, once the conditions for consolidation have been identified and a suitable process established, the communities identified in Part IV of this report, *Costs and Consequences*, be examined to ensure that only viable schools continue to operate.

12 that the following guidelines apply for all schools:
   1. where numbers warrant, appropriate religious education programs be offered as part of the curriculum, and
   2. where numbers do not warrant, and where students of other religious groups are enroled, opportunities be provided for approved representatives to have appropriate access to students of their faith to have their religious education needs addressed.

13 that, for all new schools the following guidelines shall apply:
   1. that they be schools which can serve the needs of all students in a neighbourhood or area.
   2. that comprehensive, long-term planning, on the part of the school board and involving the community, be completed, and
   3. that the educational, cultural and recreational needs of the surrounding communities and/or neighbourhoods be considered.

14 that for each school an inventory be developed which evaluates its long-term viability, facilities, special needs and program requirements, future maintenance and future construction requirements.

15 that, through legislation, provision be made for the establishment and maintenance of School Councils.

16 that policies be established by school boards to facilitate the effective operation of School Councils and that each school board assign staff responsibility for the establishment and development of effective School Councils.

17 that the Department of Education assign staff responsibility for addressing parental issues and providing mechanisms to ensure the meaningful involvement of parents. These responsibilities should include:
   1. monitoring school boards to ensure that School Councils are established and maintained,
   2. developing a clearinghouse of information on local governance for distribution to school boards,
   3. providing information on parental roles which have been tried successfully elsewhere, and
   4. in an annual report to the Minister, describing the status of School Councils.

18 that the following responsibilities be considered as part of the overall mandate of the School Council:
   1. to protect local educational interests,
   2. to influence the formation of the school,

3. to share with the school board in school-level decisions, such as curriculum, funding and staffing,
4. to authorize the raising of funds at the school level,
5. to communicate to the school board its concerns about board policies and practices,
6. to seek ways to involve parents, particularly those who, in the past, have chosen not to be involved in school life,
7. to analyze the information about how well the school is doing and, with the assistance of the school board, prepare an annual report to parents, and
8. to hold meetings with parents to discuss the annual report and any other matters concerning the operation of the school.

19 that each School Council co-operatively develop a statement of mission and goals that would be congruent with the powers of the Councils as stipulated in legislation, and that these statements serve as the reference for all school-based decisions.

20 that each School Council communicate its mission and goals to all its constituents: students, parents, school staff, the community and the school board.

21 that each School Council comprise an appropriate balance of representatives from the following groups:
1. parents elected by the parents of children registered at the school,
2. teachers elected by teachers,
3. representatives of the churches,
4. representatives from the community chosen by the other council members, and
5. the school principal (ex officio).

22 that, in collaboration with the school board, each School Council prepare a formal *School Protocol Agreement* to address the following:
1. background and rationale for the agreement,
2. strategies for the provision of religious education,
3. obligations, roles and responsibilities of each partner (the school board and School Council),
4. strategies to facilitate parental input,
5. strategies to encourage and strengthen school/community relations, and
6. mechanisms for regular review of the roles and responsibilities of the Council and the Protocol Agreement.

23 that the primary role of the church in school life should continue to be the development and provision of religious education programs and additionally providing pastoral care to students.

24 that pastoral care ministries be established with the following mandate:
1. to foster the spiritual growth of students;
2. to assist with spiritual and religious activities in schools;

3. to provide skilled pastoral counsellors in the areas of individual, group and family therapy; crisis intervention; and grief and bereavement assistance; and
4. to provide ethical consultation.

25 that the need to strengthen the role of the church in education through pastoral care ministries be recognized and that school boards co-operate with the churches in developing appropriate pastoral care models for implementation.

26 that all existing school boards be dissolved and that new school boards be established.

27 that all school board members be elected to office and that every adult, eligible under the *Elections Act*, be eligible to stand for election to school board office.

28 that the following new school boards be created:

1. Avalon East
2. Avalon West
3. Burin Peninsula
4. Gander-Bonavista
5. Exploits-Green Bay-Bay d'Espoir
6. Corner Brook-Deer Lake
7. Stephenville-Port aux Basques
8. Northern Peninsula-Southern Labrador
9. Labrador

29 that school boards be resourced in a manner which allows both flexibility and discretion in employing and deploying personnel at the school board level.

30 that each school board develop and communicate to its constituents and staff a statement of its mission and goals, and that this statement be a guide in all planning.

31 that each school board, in association with the Department of Education, participate in a comprehensive and continuing planning process that involves all of its schools, addresses the needs of students and teachers, and reflects the long-term budget requirements of the board.

32 that, as part of the planning activities, each school board devise ways to introduce a district-wide school improvement process.

33 that each school board establish and support active partnerships with other boards, businesses, associations, church groups and School Councils in order to promote widespread support for educational endeavours.

34 that the Department of Education take on primary responsibility for the following roles:

1. establishing and maintaining the legal framework,

2. setting provincial education goals and standards, and ensuring they are met,
3. establishing the means to assess the effectiveness of the system,
4. providing the appropriate resources to the system,
5. seeing that the education system is appropriately employed to protect the public interest, and
6. seeing that the resources, both human and financial, allocated are effectively and efficiently utilized.

35 that the following objectives be considered part of the long-term comprehensive planning for the Department of Education:
1. developing and nurturing strong leadership and direction,
2. strengthening its role in the areas of system-wide planning, policy development, performance standards, curriculum enhancement,
3. maximizing program, financial and administrative accountability by establishing clear and relevant education goals, instituting rigorous standards, and providing measures to ensure they are realized,
4. instituting measures to highlight and reward excellence in achievement and teaching,
5. strengthening the ties between all levels of education (pre-school, elementary-secondary, post-secondary, and continuing education), and between education and work, and
6. making fuller and more effective use of technology.

36 that the existing Denominational Educational Councils be dissolved and that the present Denominational Policy Commission be responsible for (1) advising government on educational policy which affects the rights of denominations; (2) overseeing the development of Religious Education and Family Life programs; (3) facilitating pastoral care; and (4) advising School Councils on educational policy which affects the rights of denominations.

37 that the Department of Education resource the development of religious education programs.

38 that full responsibility for the certification of teachers be placed with the Teachers' Certification Committee and that the relevant sections of the *Education (Teacher Training) Act* be revised accordingly.

39 that Teacher Certification be changed so that the principle of renewable certification be established and the procedure to operationalize this principle be developed by the Department of Education and the Newfoundland Teachers' Association.

40 that a provincial School Planning and Construction Board, fully responsible for the allocation of funds for new school construction and the maintenance and renovation of existing schools, be legislated.

41 that the School Planning and Construction Board have specific responsibilities for (1) instituting a long-term school construction and maintenance plan for the province, (2) advising appropriate levels of provincial funding, (3) establishing guidelines and standards for the

construction of schools, (4) identifying provincial needs and priorities, (5) allocating funds for the construction and maintenance of schools, and (6) establishing linkages with other government departments and agencies to facilitate the planning of school/community facilities.

42 that all capital funds be allocated on the basis of province-wide priorities.

43 that the principle of allocating funds based on a multi-year capital plan be continued.

44 that a program to respond to the ongoing capital and upgrading needs of the province be developed and implemented.

45 that a special program to respond to the equipment needs of schools be developed.

46 that appointments to the School Planning and Construction Board be made by the Denominational Policy Commission.

47 that the effectiveness of native school councils be independently evaluated in five years.

48 that a committee be established to study in detail the school learning problems in selected native communities, and that this committee be provided with the resources necessary to enable it to investigate the problems and to make its report promptly.

Organization and Administration of Schools

49 that, in order to achieve a high level of autonomy and flexibility, school boards determine who should be employed, for what purposes, where, and for what periods of time for all personnel at the school board level.

50 that the length of the work year for **all** district office personnel be stipulated under the terms of their employment.

51 that the Professional Development Centre, in collaboration with school boards and the Faculty of Education, investigate and pilot new models of school administration.

52 that schools be encouraged to develop administrative teams comprising principals, vice-principals, and other staff members.

53 that school boards develop and prioritize goals and strategies for principals in order to address issues such as time management, collaboration, instructional leadership, and professional development.

54 that school boards devise appropriate strategies to enable principals to function in their proper role as instructional leaders and the Professional Development Centre establish institutes to assist in this task.

55 that all principals, vice-principals and guidance counsellors be expected to teach at least one course each school year.

56 that a program be established to give school administrators special recognition for outstanding service. The purpose of the program should be to reward **exceptional** leadership by providing opportunities for:
   1. paid leave,
   2. secondment to the Professional Development Centre,
   3. engaging in university projects and special research,
   4. visiting centres of excellence,
   5. meeting with key educational leaders and scholars, and
   6. career advancement.

57 that the role of vice-principals be clearly defined and that vice-principals be encouraged and enabled, through professional development opportunities, to assume a more meaningful role in the school administration.

58 that the Department of Education and school boards review the position of department head.

59 that **all** positions in education having administrative responsibilities be term appointments.

60 that the Department of Education establish a program and regulations to certify administrators.

61 that the Professional Development Centre, in co-operation with the Department of Education, school boards and school administrators, develop relevant in-service education activities and special institutes for all types of school administration.

62 that the Professional Development Centre develop an Administrators' Institute on multi-grade teaching. The purpose of the institute shall be to address issues such as the integration of the curricula, development of effective multi-grade teaching strategies, development of group management skills, and facilitation of co-operative learning strategies.

The Changing Face of Teaching

63 that the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, in collaboration with the Department of Education and school boards, and other youth-serving agencies undertake an analysis of the status of classroom teaching in the province with particular emphasis on the problems resulting from classroom management, student discipline, student attendance and the non-academic needs of students.

64 that the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and the Department of Education, in collaboration with parents, convene jointly a provincial symposium on student discipline and attendance with a view to (a) creating a public awareness of the extent of the issues, (b) generating a public debate on the issues, and (c) seeking ways and means to improve discipline and increase attendance, and (d) sponsoring research designed to identify the magnitude of the problems.

The Teaching Profession

65 that each school appoint a Staff Development Committee, chaired by the principal, to develop a Staff Development Plan which identifies (a) program and curricular needs, (b) staff needs, (c) school improvement needs, and (d) administrative and organizational needs.

66 that schools submit their Staff Development Plans to their respective school boards each year for approval.

67 that school boards use the individual Staff Development Plans to develop a co-ordinated strategy for professional development in the district.

68 that school administrators assist teachers to implement what they learn from their professional development activities.

69 that the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, the Faculty of Education, and other educational constituencies, publish a regular professional education journal, which would present ideas for new teaching methodologies, identify potential new resources, and serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas.

70 that a provincial Professional Development Centre be created with primary responsibility for addressing professional development needs of teachers, administrators and education system volunteers.

71 that the Professional Development Centre be administered and financed jointly by the Department of Education, school boards, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and the Faculty of Education of Memorial University.

72 that the Professional Development Centre construct and implement a long-term development plan to address the leadership and professional development needs of teachers and administrators. The development plan shall incorporate the following:

1. a system-wide professional-development needs assessment, including appropriate means to address those needs,
2. a survey of beginning teachers to determine their degree of satisfaction with their preparation for teaching and to identify issues which could be addressed through pre-service and in-service education,
3. proposals to address the professional development needs of the system, which reflect balance, choice, and flexible scheduling (including the concept of week-long institutes), and
4. consultations with provincial and local interests about educational performance, expectations and continuing education programs.

73 that, when school boards lack adequate expertise or resources to address their in-service education needs, the Professional Development Centre be requested to develop and deliver suitable programs.

74 that professional development activities be mandatory for every individual involved in and making decisions about the education system and that the Department of Education, school boards, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, and Faculty of Education define what constitutes appropriate professional development activities.

75 that, through the Professional Development Centre, special in-service training and professional development services be developed and made available for teachers working in small rural schools and in multi-graded classrooms.

76 that teachers, administrators and volunteers be given access to programs and other services through school computers and distance education services.

77 that the Faculty of Education undertake research into the school contexts in which first year teachers are placed with a view to gathering realistic information to help shape preparation programs.

78 that Faculty of Education programs be designed to prepare teachers for the learning context of the schools and classrooms where prospective teachers are expected to teach.

79 that the Faculty of Education of Memorial University, in conjunction with the Teacher Certification Committee and the Professional Development Centre, work on continuing education programs to encourage teachers to remain current in their academic fields and methodologies.

80 that the Faculty of Education establish a Centre for Small Schools which would address problems of particular concern to small schools, and approaches to teaching in multi-grade classrooms.

81 that the Faculty of Education examine its undergraduate program components to ensure there is a core of subject-oriented courses which would develop the essential skills of reading comprehension, writing, speaking, listening, and clear thinking.

82 that the Faculty of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Education and School Boards, undertake a continuing effort to identify and respond to the changing needs of the school system through an annual follow-up of graduates who enter the teaching profession, and thus gather information to assess program relevance.

83 that the Faculty of Education and school boards develop induction programs for beginning teachers.

84 that the Faculty of Education affirm the prominence of teaching and appropriately reward standards of excellence in teaching within the Faculty.

85 that the Faculty of Education seek to strike a balance between teaching and research which would extend status and benefits to those who are outstanding teachers.

86 that the Faculty of Education, in conjunction with school boards, designate selected schools as University Schools which would assume

a co-operative role with the Faculty of Education in order to prepare teachers adequately for the realistic demands of teaching and to enable the Faculty to experiment with innovative teaching ideas and practices.

87 that the Department of Education, Faculty of Education, school boards, and NTA participate in an assessment of present and future employment needs of the school system in order to promote an awareness among prospective teachers of these areas of need.

88 that the Labrador school board, the Department of Education, and the Faculty of Education of Memorial University coordinate the offering of courses required in native teacher education programs to permit native teachers and native teacher assistants an opportunity to improve their qualifications at an accelerated rate.

89 that the Minister of Education initiate discussions at the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) level with a view to establishing an accreditation process for Faculties of Education.

90 that the Faculty of Education establish an External Advisory Council of teachers, administrators, and Department of Education personnel, and that the purpose of the Council be to (a) foster the formal exchange of ideas, (b) advise on the appropriateness and relevance of teacher education programs, (c) facilitate collaboration in research and innovation in the school system, and (d) establish mechanisms to enable teachers to work with the Faculty of Education, and Faculty members to work with the school system.

Curriculum

91 that, with respect to curriculum development and revision, and as specified in this report, the Department of Education (1) establish the vision, (2) oversee the development of new curricula, (3) set level and program goals, (4) set grade and subject objectives and achievement standards, (5) develop evaluation guidelines, (6) recommend and authorize multiple learning resources and (7) publish curricula guides.

92 that the Department of Education establish a curriculum development process which is facilitated internally but developed through the use of teachers, specialists and other external developers.

93 that the Department of Education employ Curriculum Development Specialists for the primary, elementary, junior high, and senior high levels to monitor curriculum issues and facilitate the curriculum development process.

94 that the Department of Education, the Faculty of Education, school boards and related agencies establish appropriate policies for addressing the curriculum needs of children in multi-grade classes.

95 that the Department of Education examine its learning objectives, particularly at the primary and elementary levels, to develop subject area integration appropriate for small schools and multi-grade classes.

96 that the Department of Education, with the involvement and advice of teachers from small and multi-grade schools, develop a curriculum handbook of techniques and skills appropriate for teachers of multi-grade classes.

97 that the Department of Education provide for alternative texts and resources for students working independently in multi-grade classes.

98 that the Department of Education, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and school boards provide a forum for multi-grade teachers to share their most effective teaching strategies and practices with their peers.

99 that the Professional Development Centre, in co-operation with school boards, develop programs to address the professional development needs of teachers in multi-grade classes.

100 that, with respect to curriculum implementation, and as specified in this report, school boards (1) develop district learning objectives, (2) implement curricula (3) monitor curricula and (4) update curricula.

101 that, based on local needs and conditions and where resources, expertise, and interest exist, the Department of Education authorize, support, and encourage school boards in the development of (1) units within courses, and (2) locally developed courses. These units and courses must be in line with provincial program and learning goals and objectives, and should be authorized by the Department of Education.

102 that the Department of Education change its present policy on the method of acquisition and payment for textbooks, to a more flexible method of providing and funding textbooks and other learning resources to schools.

103 that, at the beginning of each year, parents and students be advised of the grade level learning objectives and the method of evaluation that will be used.

104 that, whereas there appears to be a conflict between its philosophy of a child-centred, activity-based approach and the practice of organizing curriculum in a subject-oriented manner, the Department of Education should review and clarify its philosophy and practices concerning primary education. Part of that review should include an investigation of the merits and feasibility of organizing the primary level on a non-graded basis.

105 that School Councils, in collaboration with social workers and public health nurses, provide the parents of young children with information and resources on the importance of reading to them.

106 that school boards work co-operatively with School Councils to hold workshops for parents of pre-schoolers to promote school readiness.

107 that a learning-readiness profile of each child be compiled at school entry to assist with suitable programming and to facilitate appropriate comparisons at the end of the primary level.

108 that kindergarten children be provided a full day of schooling.

109 that a minimum of 50 percent of the instruction at the primary level be spent in the general areas of language, mathematics and science, and that these times be carefully monitored and enforced by schools and school boards.

110 that school boards consider the employment of an instructional specialist for the primary level.

111 that on-going professional development opportunities be provided for teachers of primary children to help them keep abreast of new teaching strategies, and new curriculum developments in delivering curriculum in primary classrooms and in meeting the challenges of an evolving curriculum.

112 that the Department of Education and school boards review the elementary curriculum to facilitate the transitions from primary school to elementary school and from elementary school to junior high school, and examine the appropriateness of curriculum content and teaching strategies for this age group.

113 that in-service institutes be arranged to assist teachers with the methodologies and curriculum developments appropriate for elementary level teaching.

114 that all curriculum components and activities be structured in a way which provides opportunities to reinforce and enhance learning in the areas of language, mathematics and science.

115 that, at the elementary level, a minimum of 50 percent of the instructional time be spent in the general areas of language, mathematics and science, and that these times be carefully monitored and enforced by schools and school boards.

116 that school boards consider the employment of an instructional specialist for the elementary level.

117 that the Department of Education develop a junior high school level curriculum guide. The curriculum guide should include, among other things, (1) a clear set of learning expectations for junior high learners based on the Aims of Education and current learning theory, (2) the values, knowledge and skills students should acquire during the junior high years, (3) the mandatory curriculum components.

118 that school boards define junior high policies in a manner which gives priority to a curriculum which is appropriate and responsive to the academic and intellectual interests of young adolescents.

119 that a core curriculum be identified that is based on the developmental needs of young adolescents and provides continuity with the curriculum of the elementary and senior high years.

120 that school boards give consideration to the employment of an instructional specialist for junior high school level education.

121 that the Faculty of Education of Memorial University undertake a review of its pre-service education programs to address the needs of those who wish to teach at the junior high level.

122 that the Professional Development Centre arrange for appropriate in-service education for junior high school teachers and administrators. The focus should be on new approaches to understanding early adolescent development, learning ways to implement promising new methods for junior high school teaching, and exploring the use of mentoring programs and other community resources to help students improve their opportunities for success.

123 that school boards, in their hiring practices at this level, give preference to those who have undertaken programs and/or in-service training appropriate to junior high teaching.

124 that the Department of Education in consultation with school boards and post-secondary institutions, evaluate all aspects of the senior high program with a view to ensuring that program goals are clearly defined, courses are logically sequenced, and the program is rigorous and challenging in all years.

125 that, while some choice in course selection is beneficial, students be guided toward a program which is as academic and rigorous as they are capable of handling.

126 that the Professional Development Centre, in co-operation with school boards, develop programs to address the professional development needs of senior high school teachers and the system.

127 that, in light of the increasing needs of students, the current method of allocating guidance personnel be reviewed.

128 that a committee be established to study the relevance of the learning styles of the Innu and Inuit children in Labrador for the purpose of facilitating effective local curriculum development.

129 that the Labrador school board immediately establish a Native Curriculum Committee comprising native parents, native teachers and curriculum specialists with a mandate to co-ordinate educational activities, and that the Department of Education provide the necessary resources to facilitate this process.

130 that a Provincial Advisory Committee on Distance Education and Technology be established. The purpose of the committee should be to advise the Department of Education on appropriate policies, priorities and strategies to guide decisions relating to distance education and the introduction of new technologies. Membership on the committee should include educators, business leaders and others who are knowledgeable in the general fields of telecommunications, computer technology, and distance learning.

131 that a School of Distance Education and Technology be established to assume responsibility for the delivery of distance education courses and services, and the integration of new technology into the school system.

132 that the School of Distance Education and Technology seek to deliver full credit senior high school courses that meet provincial learning objectives.

133 that the Department of Education develop strategies to ensure that every school is equipped with a basic and appropriate communications system capable of direct communication with the School of Distance Education and Technology (such as a computer system and a modem). The priority should be those schools offering high school courses, followed by junior high, elementary and primary schools respectively.

134 that the regular and distance education curriculum development processes be fully integrated with those related to the regular curriculum.

135 that the Department of Education monitor and evaluate the introduction of all new technologies, and distance education programs and services. The purpose of the evaluations should be to ensure that the intended learning objectives are met and that maximum benefits are achieved.

The Use of Instructional Time

136 that the Department of Education, in co-operation with school boards and the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, clearly define the instructional day.

137 that the length of the school year be set at 200 days and that not fewer than 185 days be mandated as instructional.

138 that the 15 non-instructional days be designated in the following way:
1. three days for designated holidays and two days for administration,
2. five days for in-service activities for teachers,
3. five days for extra-curricular school activities, such as school spirit week and major field trips.

139 that the Department of Education and school boards implement immediately a comprehensive plan to monitor over a three-year period (a) the use of instructional time and (b) the relationship between time and school achievement, and that the results of these findings be used to determine the necessity of further changes to the amount of instructional time required.

140 that the Faculty of Education of Memorial University and the Professional Development Centre initiate a joint project to focus on effective school-classroom management strategies to maximize the use of instructional time.

141 that school administrators be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that disruptions to learning time are kept to a minimum.

142 that schools be empowered to refuse access to students who regularly disrupt the learning environment.

143 that the Department of Education make provision for school boards to explore the establishment of *alternative classroom settings* for students who have difficulty maintaining acceptable behaviour in the regular school settings, that those settings would be oriented to preparing students for re-entry to the regular classroom and, that these settings meet all basic curricular assessment requirements.

144 that school boards work with School Councils to seek ways and means to reduce absenteeism.

145 that the Department of Education and school boards monitor absenteeism to identify schools with chronic absenteeism and take corrective action to address this problem.

146 that the school year for students who attend schools in native communities be operated on a semester system to accommodate the lifestyles and cultures of those communities.

147 that School Councils, with the assistance of school boards, (a) monitor the scope and extent of homework assignments, and (b) discover ways and means of providing opportunities for all children to study and undertake school work after regular school hours.

Equal Access, Equal Opportunities

148 that the Provincial Government convene a planning group, with representation from businesses, community organizations, churches and government departments, to address the issue of child hunger, specifically (a) to investigate potential models for dealing with the issue of child hunger, (b) to explore the feasibility of developing a Provincial School Nutrition Fund, (c) to establish links among all groups concerned about the issue, and (d) to determine the most appropriate ways of assisting those who wish to implement school food programs.

149 that, to provide guidance to school boards, the Department of Education with the co-operation of the Department of Social Services and appropriate community agencies, develop guidelines for a universal policy for dealing with disclosures of child abuse within the school setting.

150 that the Department of Education review child abuse prevention programs in consultation with other government departments and agencies and determine intervention initiatives appropriate to the school setting.

151 that the Department of Education establish policy to provide direction for all provincial, school board and local initiatives in student retention. Such policy should be aimed at mobilizing federal, provincial and community levels of support.

152 that the Department of Education ensure that appropriate guidance and career counselling services are provided at all levels of the school system.

153 that the Department of Education and school boards facilitate the development of means to render high schools more receptive to students who wish to return to school.

154 that the Departments of Education, Social Services and Health (a) review current programs which support pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers, (b) establish a set of guidelines and strategies for prevention programs, and (c) develop a co-ordinated approach to service delivery,

155 that schools and school boards explore ways and means to become more responsive to the educational needs of pregnant teenagers and teenage parents.

156 that the Department of Education continue its efforts towards gender equity and build on current policy and knowledge.

157 that the Department of Education and school boards ensure that schools enable students to make healthy choices and informed, responsible decisions, particularly as they relate to relationships and careers.

158 that the Department of Education and school boards take steps to ensure that the school environment reflects an equitable position for females and males in society, fosters respect for others and a sense of fundamental justice and fair play.

159 that parents be encouraged to inform school authorities when separation and divorce are occurring, so that schools and teachers may be aware, supportive and responsive to students' needs, and understanding of their behaviour.

160 that schools be encouraged to co-operate with community agencies which are able to help these children.

161 that each school board establish a Student Services Committee, with representation from those in the health, social services and guidance fields, to address the non-academic needs of students, specifically (a) to identify the scope of non-academic needs, (b) to communicate these needs to the Government (c) to identify available local resources, and (d) to propose appropriate means to address identified needs.

162 that the needs of students with learning disabilities be addressed with appropriate measures. New initiatives should consider the following: (a) early assessment of individual needs and identification of specific support services and intervention strategies, (b) appropriate teacher education and professional development activities for teachers and school administrators, (c) the best of current research and practice in the field, (d) a range of placement alternatives from the least restrictive to the most restrictive, and (e) the type and level of resources required to address each child's needs.

163 that the Department of Education and school boards take steps to ensure appropriate placement for children with learning disabilities, based on the students' needs, with the following options: (a) an Individual Program Plan with appropriate support within the regular

classroom, (b) a more structured environment outside the regular classroom, but within the school, (c) a school, or part of a school, set up within a district where numbers warrant, designated for learning disabilities, and (d) a more focused effort in a residential setting for those who require it.

164 that the Department of Education take steps to ensure that adequate resources including personnel and programming are available to school boards which have autistic students.

165 that the Provincial Government seek federal financial help to provide language training, learning resources for English Second Language students, literacy materials and multicultural learning resources as well as for settlement services.

166 that the Department of Education initiate a fee structure to charge visa students to attend school in this province.

167 that, in order to facilitate successful integration, peer coaching/teaching should become a part of the regular English Second Language program in high schools.

168 that the Department of Education increase the amount allocated for tutoring of homebound and hospitalized students.

169 that the Department of Education initiate activity in the development of policy, curriculum materials, curriculum guides, and other resources required to assist teachers and administrators to meet the needs of high-achieving students and that provisions for exceptionally able learners become an integral part of the curriculum development process, and that the development of resources not preclude, where warranted, the provision of other services for exceptionally able learners, such as Individualized Program Plans, specialized classes and grade acceleration.

170 that, for the benefit of boards who seek direction in establishing suitable programs, the Department of Education compile and disseminate information on existing programs and services.

171 that the effectiveness of different models of special education and of different components of these models (i.e. segregated special education classes, full integration, partial integration, use of student assistants, role of the special education specialist) be evaluated, considering the learning needs of both children with exceptionalities and others in the classroom and school.

172 that an impartial review of special education policy be undertaken with a view to examining (a) the appropriateness of existing policy in light of the requirements of special-needs students and others, (b) adequacy, allocation and utilization of resources, (c) the education of classroom and special education teachers, (d) the quality of junior and senior high school programs for special-needs students, (e) the role of student assistants, (f) classroom factors such as class size, layout and design, (g) the roles of guidance counsellors and educational therapists, (h) the ways teachers are supported to work with diverse

needs within classrooms, (i) parental perspectives on the program planning process and how this correlates with the extent and quality of their involvement, and (j) the need for and effectiveness of alternative placements for students whose behaviour jeopardizes the learning of others in the classroom.

173 that the Department of Education establish a Provincial Advisory Committee on Learning Support Systems for Children with Exceptionalities to guide a process of refining policy and practice and to develop new approaches for the future.

Connecting Education

174 that the Provincial Government develop a comprehensive provincial mandate and accompanying protocols on early childhood development, and that its purpose be (a) to develop appropriate social and developmental goals for all children before they enter school, (b) to develop appropriate assessment procedures for children when they reach age three, (c) to identify children who are not progressing with age-appropriate skills, and (d) to research, develop, implement and evaluate appropriate intervention strategies to achieve the social and developmental goals.

175 that school boards co-ordinate and encourage out-reach or prevention programs to link children with the school system at an earlier age.

176 that school boards make available excess space in schools to encourage the operation of formal or informal pre-school programs.

177 that school councils be encouraged to develop prevention programs for families with pre-school children, such as
1. education programs for new parents,
2. prenatal and family nutrition,
3. book resource centres,
4. toy exchanges,
5. parenting skills development,
6. reading programs, and
7. development of reading skills for families.

178 that Government strike an inter-departmental committee to establish protocols which will ensure that all support services for children are delivered in a co-ordinated manner, and that the committee
1. assess the provision of existing services,
2. determine the nature and scope of services which should be considered,
3. determine the resources required,
4. establish protocols, and
5. assess the implications for each department.

179 that an Advisory Group on Children's Issues, representing agencies and groups involved with children and youth, be established to advise the government on matters concerning the needs of children.

180 that the *Schools Act* be amended to encourage and specify the use of school buildings outside of school hours by external groups, and to require that all schools, either new or those undergoing retrofit, be designed with community use as a specific consideration.

181 that the *School Planning Manual* be amended to include guidelines for community use of schools, such as
1. office/administrative space for outside groups,
2. storage facilities for equipment owned by outside groups, and
3. independent access to areas appropriate for community use.

182 that school boards, in consultation with the Department of Education, develop guidelines for community use of schools.

183 that the School Planning and Construction Board establish formal links with other government departments to ensure that all new buildings respond to the multiple needs of the community.

184 that, where local support has been established, the School Planning and Construction Board give consideration to a pilot project focusing on the development of a *community school* in which a wide variety of educational and community needs could be met.

185 that school boards encourage and support the establishment of local planning committees which bring together school councils, town councils, community agencies and groups interested in community education to address the educational, cultural, social and recreational needs of the area, and specifically to
1. maximize financial and human resources,
2. develop neighbourhood, community or regional plans enabling the co-operative use of facilities,
3. take appropriate measures to avoid the duplication of costly facilities and equipment, and
4. provide greater variety, better quality and increased utilization of services.

Performance and Accountability

186 that the Department of Education develop and maintain a comprehensive set of provincial education indicators.

187 that school districts be encouraged to develop additional local educational indicators.

188 that the Department of Education establish appropriate achievement standards at the end of each transition level (i.e. primary, elementary, junior high, and senior high), and that these standards be communicated to every parent and student.

189 that the Canadian Test of Basic Skills be phased out and replaced by a set of curriculum-specific criterion referenced tests developed locally but anchored nationally and internationally through the use of items for which performance characteristics are known. The administration

of the test should be alternated yearly to a standardized sample of Grade 3, 6, 9, and 12 students from across the province.

190 that, to facilitate fair comparisons between schools having different inputs, the Department of Education, in co-operation with school boards, develop an entry-level audit indicating the level of readiness of children entering school for the first time. The audit should be completed within the first three months of school.

191 that the Department of Education sponsor public opinion polls at regular intervals to measure the level of public satisfaction with schooling and to record other views on education.

192 that school boards initiate a comprehensive assessment of each school every five years.

193 that the results of these assessments and other school-level indicators be reported to School Councils. Such reporting, particulary in the case of small schools, must safeguard the anonymity of individual students.

194 that each school board conduct, on a five year cycle, a comprehensive evaluation of its policies, programs and services, and that the results form the basis for planning and reporting on an annual basis to the Minister of Education.

195 that the Department of Education prepare an annual *Report Card* on the education system based in part on provincial education indicators, and evaluation of its own policies, programs and services.

196 that the province enter into agreements with other provinces and with national and international agencies which would facilitate sharing of test items and other information necessary for comparative analysis.

197 that the Minister of Education explore with the Council of Ministers of Education Canada the possibility of developing a national item bank in the core areas of language, mathematics and science.

198 that the Department of Education, in co-operation with school boards, investigate the implementation of an integrated computerized student level database, paying particular attention to student confidentiality.

199 that all existing data-gathering efforts at the Department of Education be fully integrated.

200 that the basic unit level for reporting education data be the school.

201 that a provincial recognition program be developed and funded in order to reward:

outstanding student achievement
outstanding school achievement
creativity and innovation
exemplary teaching and educational leadership, and
outstanding contribution to the field of education.

202 that school boards establish teams of educators to devise improvement plans for schools which have been underachieving. In each case, the team will work closely with the principal, teachers and School Council and will be given access to district resources to introduce measures which lead to long-term results.

Financing Education

203 that government increase its commitment to education and reallocate within the education system any savings realized through restructuring.

204 that the Department of Education replace the present system of allocating resources with a block funding formula. The framework for the block should be determined in consultation with major provincial educational organizations, and the size of the block should be assessed through a comprehensive budgetary process involving each school board and including
1. an identification of local and regional educational needs,
2. a description of the current services provided,
3. an identification of current and future needs, and
4. an identification of desired levels of services.

205 that the salaries of teaching personnel at the school level not be included in the block formula.

206 that substitute teacher salary allocations be included in the block

207 that the Department of Education initiate collaborative strategic planning with school boards, particularly in the area of fiscal planning, to address such issues as the long range capital needs of the province's education system.

208 that all existing long-term debt of school boards be eliminated and that school boards not be permitted to incur future debt nor operate in a deficit position.

209 that the Department of Education, in cooperation with school boards, teachers and parents, develop comprehensive guidelines to govern the conditions and purposes under which school-based funds can be raised.

210 that all school-based fund-raising efforts be monitored by school boards and School Councils, and that such efforts be fully disclosed by note in the annual audited financial statements of the boards.

Federal Involvement in Education

211 that the Provincial Government explore with other governments the establishment of a National Office of Education, the purpose of which shall be to
1. address national goals for schooling,
2. establish national standards,

3. establish standards for the collection of educational data,
4. conduct national educational assessments,
5. monitor and evaluate educational trends, and
6. serve as a centre for information on education research and improvements.

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